

## Summary : Japan and China : The Past, Present and Future

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## 《Summary》

# Japan and China ~ The Past, Present and Future

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Upon entering the Meiji Period of its history (1868~1912), the Japanese nation moved to a policy of modernization under the name of “civilization and enlightenment” — a trend of transformation that was largely synonymous with “Westernization.” As noted in the academic article “Argument for Leaving Asia” penned by famed scholar and political theorist Yukichi Fukuzawa (1835~1901), calls emerged for the newly civilized Japan to break off ties with its neighbors China and Korea in favor of adopting the same basic genre of colonial policy being advanced by the Western nations.

Existing at around this same time in Japan, meanwhile, was the thinking of “Asianism” — the ideology that Japan should join hands with the other countries of Asia in mounting resistance to the colonial regimes of the West. Examining the Asianism that followed, however, it is found that the arrival of the Showa Period (1926~1989) marked a shift in ideology that sought to justify Japan’s invasion and domination of Asia under the pretext that these actions would serve to liberate Asia from the imperialism imposed by Caucasian peoples.

In China, meanwhile, throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century nationalism was used as leverage for breaking out of unequal treaty systems and es-

tablishing a nation state. The foundation of the Republic of China in 1912 and the launch of the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) in 1927 were both milestone events that accelerated this trend. Although China suffered heavy damage from Japanese aggression during the 1930s and 1940s, the resistance to the invasion and occupation characterizing that era eventually led to the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century all remaining colonies had vanished from China and the rest of Asia (with Hong Kong and Macao being the last examples of such protectorates to go). The Cold War between the East and the West likewise wound down to conclusion, with the world entering a new stage in its history.

Through the 1970s Japan continued to reign as the sole economically advanced nation of Asia. From that decade on, however, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and the members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) also began to achieve swift economic development, while from the 1990s China and India made their respective full-fledged debuts in the arena of the international community.

It is not wise to allow one's attention to be dominated by the nationalism within Asia. Also steadily taking shape is a new "regionalism" under the banner of Asia. The search continues for frameworks to effectively define this new order, including the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Six-Party Talks surrounding North Korea's nuclear development program and other budding structures.

In the current day and age, the demand is for a new Asianism. This does not refer either to the type of efforts to expel Caucasian imperialism from Asia seen in the past or to hegemony by Japan as the lead-

ing state in the region. The call, rather, is for a system of Asian cooperation that is open to the world.

Looking to the future, finally, both Japan and China should be able to benefit from stable growth and development within a framework along these lines.